

EVALUATION OF BUDGET REQUEST K-12 EDUCATION DATA SYSTEMS

Justification – Why is this proposal needed?

This request is for \$3.772 million for the 2009 biennium to support the Montana Statewide Accountability System for Education (MontSASE). This funding will cover expenses related to maintaining and enhancing the student achievement system and e-grants systems that OPI is implementing in the 2007 biennium; expanding the system development to include data on school staffing; and for the purchase of equipment necessary to operate secure and reliable data systems.

The proposal includes the following components:

- 1) Maintaining and enhancing the student achievement system and electronic grants management system. Funding will be needed for on-going contracts with vendors and for personal services and operating budgets for 4 FTE at OPI, including the OPI project manager, data resource administrator, database administrator, and student records manager. OPI also proposes to allocate \$450,000 annually to assist schools with the exchange of data between local district systems and the state education data systems.
- 2) Expanding the K-12 education data systems to include data on school staffing, including teacher qualifications, experience, professional development, teacher mobility, personnel assignments, employment status, and salary and benefit information. Funding will be needed to contract with vendors/facilitators to design the data models and for 2 FTE at OPI to implement the expanded data collections.
- 3) Purchasing of servers, backup and offsite disaster recovery services, and facilities for equipment necessary to operate the data systems.

The proposal positively impacts students in Montana's K-12 schools by improving data collection practices and the quality of data about Montana educators. Policymakers will be able to make better decisions about strategies to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers and to improve educational services to students.

Goals – What are the goals of the proposal?

It is the mission of the Office of Public Instruction to improve teaching and learning through communication, collaboration, advocacy, and accountability to those we serve.

The five agency-wide goals of the Office of Public Instruction are:

- Goal 1: Support schools so that all students can achieve high standards
- Goal 2: Assess and communicate the quality and achievements of K-12 education
- Goal 3: Provide access to and management of information and data related to K-12 school improvement
- Goal 4: Deliver quality instruction through professional development
- Goal 5: Support accountability and improvement in all Montana schools

This proposal supports three of the five agency-wide goals of the Office of Public Instruction. The three goals that are targeted with this proposal are:

- ✓ Assess and communicate the quality and achievements of K-12 education

- ✓ Provide access to and management of information and data related to K-12 school improvement
- ✓ Support accountability and improvement in all Montana schools

Performance Criteria – How will progress be measured?

Implementation of AIM and the Electronic Grants Management System

In the 2007-2008 school year, school districts and the Office of Public Instruction will complete a full data collection cycle using AIM (Achievement in Montana), the new statewide student achievement system. The integrated data collection will provide enrollment counts, student demographic data, information about students served by state and federal education programs, including special education information services and programs.

In the 2007-2008, the Office of Public Instruction will eliminate data collections and report forms that require school district to aggregate student counts prior to submittal to OPI. OPI will not require school districts to "re-assemble" and report any student demographic or assessment data that is already stored at OPI.

In 2007-2008, OPI will use the AIM system to register students for the statewide student assessment and report on student achievement and Adequate Yearly Progress under No Child Left Behind.

In 2007-2008, state and federal education grant applications will be submitted, reviewed, and tracked through the electronic grants management system. OPI will process allocations and disbursements through this same system. The integrated system will require schools to tie their grant resources to their comprehensive education plans and performance indicators.

By June 2009, OPI will incorporate the electronic grants management tool into the five year comprehensive education plan, thereby providing the mechanism by which schools can link their financial resources to their educational program goals.

Development of the School Staffing Module

OPI will complete a strategic and tactical plan for the development of the school staffing module of the Achievement in Montana (AIM) information system. The planning process will involve various stakeholders who collect and use data related to school staffing, including the OPI, the Teachers Retirement System, teacher education and education leadership programs, MEA-MFT, legislative staff, and employee benefits providers.

Once the planning process is complete, OPI will be ready to issue a Request for Proposals to develop and implement the new module. After selecting a vendor, OPI will begin work on the school staffing module.

The first collection using the new module will be school personnel assignments. Additional collections related to staff salaries and experience levels must be coordinated with TRS data collections and OPI's educator licensure system. The data collection instruments for collecting educational qualifications, staff salaries and benefit information will be determined through the planning process.

Milestones – When will key activities be completed?

AIM – Achievement in Montana

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| October 2006 | All K-12 students in public or private accredited schools are assigned a unique student identifier. (OPI will not collect Social Security Numbers.) |
| November 2006 | Training of school personnel completed for first data collection through AIM Training materials available in printed and recorded electronic formats |
| December 2006 | All school districts provide student counts through AIM for registration for the statewide student assessment |
| February 2007 | Spring enrollment count completed using AIM OPI eliminates the collection of aggregate student counts through the Annual Data Collection and MAEFAIRS |
| March 2007 | Testing cycle enrollment count completed using AIM |
| April 2007 | Special education reporting begins in AIM |
| June 2007 | OPI renews contracts with vendors for AIM |
| August 2007 | OPI distributes local assistance to schools to support local information systems and staff training |
| September 2007 | OPI provides field training for new and experienced school personnel |

Electronic Grants Management

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| May 2007 | School districts complete the Federal Consolidated Application (FCA) for using the new electronic grants management system |
| June 2007 | School districts complete grant applications for funding under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) |
| June 2007 | OPI renews contracts with vendors for student achievement system and electronic grants management system |
| December 2007 | OPI expands the electronic grants management system to include state and federal grants not included in the FCA |

Staffing Module

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| July 2007 | OPI hires educator data specialist and educator records manager |
| November 2007 | OPI completes planning document for school staffing module |
| November 2007 | OPI issues an RFP for the development of the staffing module |
| February 2008 | OPI contracts with selected vendor for the staffing module |
| September 2008 | OPI collect personnel assignments from schools using new module |
| September 2009 | OPI, in coordination with other state entities, begins collecting salary and benefit information and education experience levels |

FTE – Who will do the work?

In 2005, the legislature authorized \$2.8 million and 4.0 FTE positions at OPI for the development of K-12 education data systems. The funding and positions were designated as one-time only, which meant that OPI would need to present justification to the 2007 legislature for the resources necessary to fund the on-going costs of the new system. OPI has hired the 4.0 FTE positions and requests the on-going funding for these essential positions.

1.0 FTE Project Manager – This position serves as the project manager for both the AIM project and the e-grants project. The project manager oversees the contracts with vendors (Infinite

Campus for AIM; MTW, Inc. for the e-grants system), coordinates the work of the project teams, and has the responsibility for managing the projects so that they are completed on-time and within budget and provide the functionality described in the contract documents. The person in this position brings the experience and skill set necessary to facilitate the complex project management process and is key to the successful completion of these projects. This same position will manage the contract for the school staffing module as it is developed.

1.0 FTE Database Administrator (DBA) – This position ensures that the OPI data systems are available and maintain satisfactory performance to the maximum extent possible. This is accomplished by ensuring that the OPI data systems meet OPI, state, and industry standards for security, data storage, and backup and disaster recovery procedures. This position also establishes or is involved in establishing most of OPI's policies and procedures relative to data systems.

1.0 FTE Data Resource Administrator (DRA) – This position is the "public face" of the AIM system in that the DRA works with OPI and school personnel to develop and enforce the policies and procedures necessary to ensure a robust and functional information system. This position has frequent communication with school personnel, seeking advice and consultation from system users and sharing information about OPI's plans and processes.

1.0 FTE Student Records Manager – This position manages the assignment of student identifiers to all students (approximately 146,000) who are served in the K-12 public school system. This position has a key role in data quality control by assuring that all students are assigned one and only one identifier and working with schools to keep enrollment information current when students enter, transfer within, dropout, or otherwise exit the public school system.

NEW 1.0 FTE Educator Data Specialist – This position will facilitate the planning process and systems analysis for school staffing module. Upon completion of the planning phase, this position will develop and enforce the policies and procedures necessary for the implementation of the staffing module and the integration of this module with other state agency users (OPI Education Licensure, TRS, and the university system).

NEW 1.0 FTE Educator Records Manager - This position will manage the assignment of unique identifiers to all school system staff (educators and licensed professionals, at a minimum) who are employed in the K-12 public school system. This position has a key role in data quality control by assuring that all staff are assigned one and only one identifier and working with schools to keep staffing information current.

Funding – How does the funding work?

This request is for a general fund appropriation. An integrated K-12 education data system is necessary to evaluate and improve the state's basic system of quality education and to measure student achievement and progress over time. Federal funds have been and continue to be used to augment portions of the K-12 education systems, including the special education information management component as well as staff time to design of the systems. The state resources are needed to ensure the system is designed to meet the full spectrum of information needs for the State of Montana. OPI has applied unsuccessfully for federal competitive grants to fund its K-12 education data system. OPI will continue to compete for these resources as further opportunities become available.

Obstacles – What are the challenges to implementing the proposal?

The development of the AIM system and e-grants system are well underway in the 2007 biennium. To date, both projects are on-time, within budget and are being designed to meet the functional requirements determined by OPI. To ensure that the benefits of these systems continue, resources are needed for the on-going costs associated with maintaining and updating these systems.

Training of school personnel to use these systems is critical to their success. At least one person in each of Montana's 440 school districts needs to know how to use the system for data collection and reporting purposes. Given the number of individuals involved, OPI must have good communication systems and training tools to reach its many customers in the school districts.

Approximately 25 school districts do not have high speed internet access, which is very helpful for ensuring customer satisfaction with the system. OPI can work with the school districts that have high speed access available, but have not yet signed up for it. However, it appears that some of our extremely isolated districts may not even have the service available. OPI will continue to explore options with small rural schools to improve their connectivity.

Risks – What is the risk to the state if the proposal is not adopted?

One of the components of the basic system of quality public elementary and secondary schools (20-9-309, MCA) is a procedure to assess and track achievement in the programs established under the Montana accreditation standards, programs to provide services for students with special needs, and educational programs to implement Indian Education for All.

The state has already committed \$2.8 million to the development of K-12 education data systems. The many benefits that can result from high quality information and accountability systems will not be realized until these systems have been in place for at least a couple of years. It is crucial that the legislature continue to support these information systems in order to evaluate the overall success of our K-12 public school system.